

Use licensed software to improve SME profits, says KPDNHEP

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A survey has shown that when a company enhances their software management, they can improve profits by as much as 11%

by S BIRRUNTHA / pic by MUHD AMIN NAHARUL

BUSINESSES, mainly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) should legalise their software assets in order to gain better earnings, said the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP).

Malaysian companies must understand that shifting to licensed software is a business imperative, its secretary general Datuk Seri Hasnol Zam Zam Ahmad emphasised.

"The BSA Global Software survey has shown that when organisations take pragmatic steps to enhance their software management, they can improve profits by as much as 11%," he told reporters at the launch of BSA's (The Software Alliance) "Legalise & Protect" campaign in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Over time, the government has been proactive in taking steps to educate the public on software and copyright piracy, Hasnol said, adding that awareness and education are the key approaches to the matter.

"At the moment, we are stepping up our enforcement activities to send the right messages and also cultivate a responsible culture among business communities to appreciate and embark on the utilisation of licensed software."

The ministry has conducted many raids and seizures of equipment which have resulted in a decline in the use of unlicensed software, Hasnol added.

From 2016 until 2019, it successfully mounted 15 enforcement raids and seized computers and copies of suspected pirated software, with a combined estimated value of RM912,100.

"We are sending a strong warning to companies that the use of unlicensed software is a serious infringement of copyright and the long arm of the law will reach those found guilty of doing so," Hasnol stated.

Company leaders and senior management therefore should not adopt a lackadaisical stance when it comes to this issue, as they are the ones who will face fines and/or imprisonment.

Based on BSA's survey, the rate of unlicensed software use in Malaysia stood at 51% in 2017.

It also highlighted that the use of unlicensed software is still prevalent among companies in the SouthEast Asian region and it is mostly attributed to the company's apathy, intent or even neglect.

On that note, a 90-day campaign was established by BSA together with KPDNHEP to encourage businesses to voluntarily legalise their software before finding themselves subject to government enforcement action.

The "Legalise & Protect" campaign aims to reach 10,000 businesses, particularly local SMEs to help the enterprises protect themselves.

As part of the campaign, BSA will be sending notices to companies by highlighting the operational, legal, security and reputational risks of using unlicensed software.

Upon receipt of these notices, firms will have 90 days to voluntarily legalise their software assets.

Those that continue to use unlicensed software at the end of the campaign period will be in violation of the Copyright Act 1987.

BSA, an advocate for the global software industry, operates in over 60 countries to create software solutions to enhance the economy and modern life.

It also promotes legal software use and advocates for public policies that will help foster technology innovation and drive growth in the digital economy.